

Message Text

SECRET

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17

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 SAM-01 EB-07 INT-05 FEA-01 AID-05

CIEP-01 /085 W

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R 251017Z JAN 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1572

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 72

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN PM GANDHI'S VISIT TO IRAQ

1. SUMMARY: JAN 18-21 VISIT OF PM INDIRA GANDHI WAS ON SURFACE STRICTLY PRESTIGE/PROTOCOL AFFAIR OF LITTLE SUBSTANCE. ALTHOUGH MRS. GANDHI SAW ALL LEADING FIGURES OF REGIME, DISCUSSIONS WERE IN GENERALITIES, EVEN WITH RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN AND PRESIDENT AL-BAKR. ONE EXCEPTION WAS OIL WHERE INDIANS MANAGED TO REVERSE EARLIER IRAQI DECISION AND OBTAIN LOAN ON SAME TERMS AS 1974. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO INDIAN EMBOFF NARAIN (PROTEC) MRS. GANDHI'S VISIT ALMOST COMPLETELY PROTOCOLAIRE, EVEN HER ONE MEETING WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN (WHEREAS FRENCH PM CHIRAC HAD FOUR LONG NEGOTIATING SESSIONS WITH HIM). JOINT COMMUNIQUE REFLECTS GENERAL ACCORD ON GENERALITIES AND NOT MUCH ELSE (ASSUME TEXT IN FBIS).

3. OIL WAS OF COURSE KEY PURPOSE OF VISIT AND IN BEGINNING MRS. GANDHI MET STONE WALL. INDIA ALREADY COMMITTED TO PURCHASE 2.8 MTA

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IN 1975 BUT PETROLEUM MINISTER BAROOAH HAD BEEN INFORMED EARLIER

THAT PURCHASE WOULD HAVE TO BE WITH CASH AT MARKET PRICE. MRS. GANDHI RAISED MATTER WITH BOTH AL-BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN AND GOT SAME FIRM BUT POLITE REFUSAL FOR LOAN. SHE WAS VERY DISCOURAGED ABOUT VISIT AFTER FIRST TWO DAYS.

4. INDIAN AMBASSADOR AND NARAIN WERE ABLE TO ARRANGE MEETING WITH ZAID HAIDAR, MEMBER OF BAATH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND NARAIN EXPLAINED MRS. GANDHI'S DISAPPOINTMENT AND POINTED OUT THAT BASIS FOR INDIA'S COOPERATION WITH IRAQ WAS OIL AND IF IT COULD GET NO CONCESSIONS IT WOULD BE FREE TO BUY WHERE IT COULD WITH UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES FOR INDIAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HAIDAR HAD THEN ARRANGED FULL MEETING OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL BAATH LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MADE TO GIVE INDIA LOAN ON SAME TERMS AS LAST YEAR FOR THE 2.8 MILLION TONS. INDIAN FORMIN EXPECTED TO COME IN MARCH TO NEGOTIATE NEW PAYMENTS AGREEMENT.

5. NARAIN ALSO TOLD ME HE WAS ABLE TO ARRANGE THROUGH COMMUNIST MINISTER OF STATE AZIZ SHERIF FOR MRS. GANDHI TO RECEIVE HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM UNIVERSITY OF BAGHDAD, AN HONOR MRS. GANDHI "HAS WEAKNESS FOR". MRS. GANDHI APPARENTLY LEFT WELL PLEASED.

6. COMMENT: VISIT HAS SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING ALIVE SUBSTANTIAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, BUT ABSENCE OF SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS SUGGESTS THAT IN FACT TWO COUNTRIES HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON. MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF VISIT FROM STRICTLY IRAQI POINT OF VIEW IS APPARENT INFLUENCE OF BAATH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OVER IRAQI GOVERNMENT DECISIONS.
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